utilization, production of sugar, bagasse based power generation, production of ethanol etc. wherever applicable, which will duly contribute towards the GDP of the country.

Hanging over FCI operations to private companies

331. SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any policy to hand over certain operations of FCI to private companies; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) There is presently no proposal to outsource any of the core activities of the Food Corporation of India (FCI) to the private sector. However, activities such as sweeping, cleaning, dusting and watching operations stand outsourced. In addition, the Civil Engineering, Maintenance works and Electrical Maintenance works of certain depots have also been outsourced. In States and areas such as J&K and the North East, engineering construction works are also being outsourced to other agencies, as the FCI does not have the required infrastructure for the same.

Amending Essential Commodities Act

332. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering sweeping changes in the Essential Commodities Act (ECA), 1955 to bring it in consonance with the liberalized economic environment;

(b) if so, whether some of the changes proposed are restricting ECA to specific sectors like drugs, edible oils, petroleum products, seeds of food crops, wheat, paddy, rice, sugar and sugarcane;